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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 4270
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0865
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 6596
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 5454
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000033

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SUBJECT: FATA UPDATE - 2 JANUARY 2009

REF: PESAHWAR 00001

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (C) Summary. On December 28, a polling station in Buner District in the NWFP was bombed, killing at least 37 people and wounding 28 others, and on December 30, the Pakistan military initiated a series of operations in Khyber Agency in the FATA, resulting in the temporary closure of the NATO supply route through the Khyber Pass. NATO/ISAF trucks are now moving again to Afghanistan. The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) continued to work with the conflict-affected populations of Bajaur Agency under the auspices of the FATA Secretariat, providing additional "Cash For Work" programs and non-food item relief kits. OTI was also able to work with the Khyber Political Agent in completing renovations to the historic Bab-e-Khyber, the famous gateway to the Khyber Pass. Registration of IDPs living outside the camps continues, and the assistance to these populations has commenced in an orderly and coordinated manner. End Summary.

BUNER SITUATION

12. (C) On December 28, at least 37 people were killed and 28 were wounded when a suspected car bomb detonated near a polling station located at a government school in Buner District within the Northwest Frontier Province. The attack took place while residents were voting in a by-election to fill the seat left vacant by Abdul Mateen Khan, a National Assembly Member and member of the Awami National Party.

13. (SBU) In response to this attack, OTI, under the auspices of the District Coordination Officer, provided approximately USD 33,000 (2,600,730 Pakistan Rupees) of equipment to the District Headquarters Hospital in Buner to assist those injured. This donation included a cardiac monitor, refrigerator, generator, and surgical supplies.

KHYBER UPDATE

14. (C) On December 30, the Pakistan security forces, including Frontier Corps and various branches of the Pakistan military and police, initiated operations in Khyber Agency within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The operation targeted seven main facilitators and resulted in the arrests of 128 suspects, including 62 illegal Afghans, and the successful capture of weapons, including a 14.5

Anti-aircraft gun. In anticipation of the operations in Khyber, the heavily-used supply route for U.S. and NATO forces through the Khyber Pass was temporarily closed and a curfew was initiated. (Note. The Khyber Pass supply route was reopened on 2 January allowing for the movement of NATO/ISAF trucks into Afghanistan. End Note.) (reftel)

15. (SBU) Under the auspices of the Khyber Political Agent, OTI also completed renovations to the historic Bab-e-Khyber, the internationally recognized monument that marks the gateway to the Khyber Pass and largest trade route to Central Asia via Afghanistan. Because of its historic significance, OTI, in collaboration with the Communications and Works department, arranged for a local renovation firm to repair the gateway's fading inscriptions and decaying foundation and footpath.

16. (SBU) At the request of the Khyber Political Agent, OTI also provided need-based scholarships to 140 female students and 24 teachers interested in continuing their education. (Note. Due to food and energy shortages, families will typically discontinue education of the females in order to save money. End note.)

BAJAUR UPDATE - CASH FOR WORK

17. (SBU) To continue to assist those within Bajaur Agency who have been affected by the recent military operations there, OTI has expanded its "Cash For Work" (CFW) program. To date,

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a total of USD 56,000 (4,413,360 Pakistan Rupees) has been paid for debris removal, ditch digging, and other clean-up activities at 85 sites, with a current average of 2000 employees employed weekly. As of January 2, OTI, with the Bajaur Political Agent, has distributed 732 non-food item relief kits to affected community members with active involvement from the local elders. However, following the January 1 rocket attack in Khar (the main city in Bajaur Agency in the FATA) that hit the FATA Rural Development Project offices, the CFW program has temporarily scaled back operations. (septel)

IDP REGISTRATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASSISTANCE

18. (SBU) As of January 2, there were 49,910 internally displaced persons (IDPs) - or approximately 7,905 displaced families - living in eleven camps, including the new camp in Swat. Despite the military operations in Khyber and its proximity to the Kacha Gari camp, the Political Agent does not report any displacement taking place in his agency. Additionally, 14,700 families or 95,000 IDPs living outside the camps in eight districts have registered so far with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the NWFP Department of Social Welfare (DSW), and these organizations estimate that approximately half of this population has now been reached. Registration has started in Swat (albeit slowly due to security restraints) and in DI Khan, Bannu, Kohat, and Karak Districts within the NWFP. (Note. According to UNHCR, approximately 3000 families have been registered and are awaiting entry into the Jalozai camp. In response, UNHCR has doubled its efforts to develop family plots within the camps, developing approximately 200 plots a day. End note.)

19. (SBU) According to the Voluntary Repatriation Center (VRC) - the transit center prior to entering an IDP camp, 73 percent of the IDPs registered are from Bajaur Agency while the rest are from Mohmand Agency, Swat District, and other locations. Continual registration of families at the VRC has revealed that approximately 50 percent of those registered are new arrivals as opposed to IDPs living in host

communities (either renting or with host families) and choosing to move to camps. The Provincial Relief Commissioner/Provincial Disaster Management Office, which is responsible for overall assistance to IDPs, and the DSW, which oversees assistance to the IDPs living outside the camps, have reported positive coordination and assistance by the GOP, UN, and humanitarian community as a whole, notably in formulating cohesive strategies for assistance.

¶10. (SBU) The pilot distribution of non-food item kits (NFIs) and food packages that began on December 19 by UNHCR, the World Food Program (WFP), and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is ongoing, assisting those IDPs living outside the camps. To date, 808 families in Nowshera District and 1,357 families in Swabi District have been assisted through this program. (Note. These kits include quilts, kitchen sets, hygiene products, woolen shawls, lanterns, and mattresses. End note.) The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), through its partner Relief International, has distributed 1,038 NFIs to families in Charsadda District and approximately 120 kits in Lower Dir, with plans to continue distribution in Lower Dir to reach a total of 2,000 kits distributed. Save the Children, another OFDA partner and in coordination with Relief International, has distributed approximately 2,500 household NFI kits and 2,500 larger hygiene kits to Charsadda and Mardan Districts, with plans to distribute 500 more of both.

¶11. (SBU) The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) has completed NFI distributions to 7,600 families in Swat, which includes the 35 families in the new camp in Odigram. USAID Livelihoods Program has distributed food and NFI kits to 2,587 flood and conflict affected IDPs in Peshawar and Mardan camps.
PATTERSON